

**PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING: Thursday, August 25, 2016; 5:00 p.m.**

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**Kilmartin Plaza**

**160 Benedict Street**

**Providence, RI 02909**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nicolas Retsinas called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:**

Nicolas Retsinas  
Dolores Cascella  
Jessica Cigna  
Roger Giraud  
Ricardo Patino  
Hilary Silver  
Gilberta 'JT' Taylor

**Absent:**

Mary Kay Harris  
John Igliozi  
Thomas Ryan  
Dorothy Waters

Seven members were present, constituting a quorum to conduct business.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Retsinas asked for a motion to accept and approve the annual meeting minutes of 6/23/16 and 7/28/16. The motion was made by Commissioner Silver, seconded by Commissioner Patino. The minutes were approved with a unanimous voice vote.

**RESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

None

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairman Retsinas reported Commissioner Waters is recovering well from her heart incident.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Chairman Retsinas asked Deputy Executive Director, Melissa Sanzaro to present the Executive Director's report. Ms. Sanzaro reported we are proceeding with the refinancing of the 2001 and 2008 Capital Fund Bonds to secure the funding for the Automated Fire Sprinkler Systems. A request will be submitted to HUD, which could take up to six months for approval. A Board Resolution will be presented at the September meeting.

Due to the failed attempts of negotiations with Rhode Island Carpenter's Union, Local 94, a Federal Mediation, and Conciliation Service (FMCS) was assigned to the PHA and said Union, to mediate any unresolved issues. The date of the mediation is currently pending.

Ms. Sanzaro stated the RI State Labor Relations Board has finalized the documentation and official certification for a new Security Guard Unit on July 13. A date is pending for negotiations on their contract.

Additionally, HUD has graciously offered to provide the PHA with guidance and technical assistance training in September through their Healthy Homes Office in regards to Lead Initiatives and Best Practices. Senator Jack Reed has requested the PHA to host a state wide Technical Assistance Training to all housing authorities in the State and to hold a press conference whereas Senator Jack Reed and HUD's Secretary Julian Castro will announce new National and Federal lead guidelines specifically with elevated blood levels with young children for both housing and Section 8 programs. The event will take place on August 31, 2016 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at 40 Laurel Hill Avenue, Training Facilities at Hartford Park with a press event following at 335 Hartford Avenue, Park Tower Community Room. Further developments will be forwarded to the Board as information becomes available.

The Deputy Executive Director commented the PHA is evaluating a new HUD initiative called FY2016 Resident Opportunity and Self Sufficiency Education (ROED) Grant to ensure greater access and opportunity for upward mobility and support of improved educational attainment more over assisting postsecondary students with financial aid information. This would offer \$2 million in funding for PHA's to deploy education navigators.

With regard to the to the joint opening of the Section 8 Waiting lists, the PHA has completed its public comment period, the FY2016 Annual Plan revision pertaining to the joint opening and new preferences is still pending HUD's approval. RI Housing is currently in their public comment period. RI Legal Services and the City of Providence are awaiting the wait list opening. RI Housing has chosen YARDI housing software program to design the system for collection and lottery of the housing application.

Ms. Sanzaro stated the PHA and the Department of Corrections met again to create actionable items to begin the process of improving communications between agencies and formally incarcerated to break down barriers to housing.

The PHA is updating their 2010 Section 3 Plan with new guidelines released last year by introducing new requirements with contractors and vendors and improve staff and partner awareness through training, better defined contracts and RFPs.

Finally, as a follow up to last months' meeting regarding Security and Operations, the PHA's Director of Security, Jack Costa, has offered to provide reports and a tour of the Public Housing Unit's Security office.

**Budget & Finance:** Commissioner Roger Giraud commented the FY2017 July report is the first month of the fiscal year and the numbers are preliminary. The finance department is focused on submissions to HUD of the non-audited FY2016 information and on the final audit. There are no new trends to report at this point.

**Resident Services:** Commissioner Silver stated the PHA received a \$72,000 grant for housing counseling services as well as a donation of \$500 for Parenti Villa to purchase exercise equipment. An application for a seatbelt grant has been submitted. Discussions continue on project based vouchers for the homeless. The summer session classes are continuing, water parks have closed for the summer and smoke free areas have been designated with benches. Hartford Park's smoke free target date is June 2017.

**Capital Improvements:** Commissioner Patino stated a new fire alarm panel was installed at 136-138 Dodge Street. Our PHA Building Systems Tele-communications Specialists and Electricians performed installation. An RFP will be going out for vinyl siding and porch replacement at several Scattered Site buildings. Bids will be advertised to replace the playground matts at Coddington Court; cost will determine how many will be completed. A contract was awarded to Ryan

Electric to relocate three electrical sub stations at Admiral Terrace; construction is expected to be completed by late October early November. Further information is provided in the Monthly Management Report. Allan Pacific, Director of Facilities Management, added there are three playgrounds to improve and the mats are \$15,000 each. Allan also stated the elevators at Carroll Tower are complete.

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

None

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

In keeping with the monthly presentations, Chairman Retsinas asked the Deputy Executive Director Melissa Sanzaro to introduce the presenter. Melissa introduced Lisa Castellanos, Special Projects Officer and her roll with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) and Planning Committees and their relations with outside agencies, programming, and administration. Lisa presented an overview of the RAB, its purpose and activities. RAB is a requirement of HUD and an essential link between the PHA and the tenants. Becoming a RAB member can offer the chance of becoming a board member.

After the presentation, commissioners addressed their questions to the RAB. RAB members introduced themselves, and explained their rolls in the community as well as addressed some of their concerns to the board. Chairman Retsinas asked Commissioner Taylor, who is the President of the RAB and a board member, her views on joining the RAB.

#### **Executive Session**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Retsinas accepted a motion to adjourn from Commissioner Cascella, seconded by Commissioner Patino. Said motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

#### **Minutes Submitted and Approved By:**

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Lisa Cancelliere  
Recording Secretary

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Melissa Sanzaro  
Deputy Executive Director